



Powhatan Ponds 2019

Located in the Powhatan Wildlife Management Area (WMA), the Powhatan ponds are a series of three small impoundments that are a combined total of 20 surface acres. The ponds lay in a series from west to east; the farthest western lying ponds is the Bass Pond followed by the Bullhead Pond then the Sunfish Pond. The bass and sunfish ponds have primitive boat launches while the Bullhead Pond requires a short walk (~ 100 yards) to access. Each pond offers ample shoreline fishing opportunities and has a typical fish community for a small central Virginia pond (Largemouth Bass, sunfish, and Channel Catfish). During April 2018, the fish communities of the Powhatan ponds were sampled by boat electrofishing gear. This report summarizes the results of these surveys and what anglers can expect to catch in the Powhatan Ponds.

A combined total of seven different fish species were collected from the three Powhatan Ponds (Table 1). Like in previous surveys, Bluegill, Largemouth Bass, and Redear Sunfish were by far the most abundant species collected in each pond (Table 1), and the catch rates for each species were high. The Largemouth Bass populations in all the ponds are highly dense, and anglers should experience good catch rates for bass. Although the numbers are high, the bass populations in each lake are poor in terms of the size of bass available to anglers. Each pond is dominated by small bass (< 11 inches, Figure 1), and on average these small bass were very skinny. The Bass Pond is managed as a high density bass fishery to increase angler catch rates, so high numbers of small bass are expected. The Sunfish Pond also has a high number of bass, especially fish in the 8 to 10 inch range (Figure 1). A few larger bass (> 15 inches) were collected in each pond but they were not very abundant. The largest bass collected in 2018 was from the Sunfish Pond and measures 21.5 inches and weighed nearly 7 pounds. Based on the 2018 survey, the Sunfish Pond has the highest potential for anglers to catch a memorable or trophy bass which is likely due to its larger size and suitable bass habitat. Novice anglers and kids searching for fast action should target the high density bass fisheries in the Bass and Sunfish Ponds. The chance of catching a large bass in any of the three ponds is fairly low but overall catch rates should be very high. Anglers looking to have a better opportunity to catch large bass, should visit the Powhatan Lakes which are located just minutes away from the ponds at the northern end of the Powhatan Wildlife Management Area.

Anglers searching for panfish should have high catch success for fish at each of the ponds, due to high abundances of Bluegill and Redear Sunfish (Table 1). A small number of Black Crappie were collected all the ponds but catches of crappie were fairly uncommon.

Crappie are not desired in small impoundments like the Powhatan Ponds because of the species tendency to overpopulate and stunt. Bluegill and redear populations were dominated by smaller individuals (< 9 inches, Figure 2). At this time, all the ponds appear to be similar in the size and numbers of sunfish available to anglers. There were a few larger (> 10 inches) crappie and redear collected in each lake. Anglers searching for panfish should fish around the brush piles and beaver huts with crickets, worm, or small twister-tailed grubs.

Channel Catfish offer anglers a different variety of fishing experience. Catch rates for Channel Catfish were low in all ponds (Table 1). Catfish often frequent deeper water making them more difficult to catch with electrofishing gear. All catfish collected were larger than 12 inches with the largest collected measuring greater than 20 inches (average size 15 inches). Catchable-sized Channel Catfish are stocked annually and should be easy to catch on some form of live or stink bait.

The Powhatan Ponds receive little fishing pressure and offer fishing locations that are off the beaten path. If you are looking for a peaceful day on the water, you should visit the Powhatan Ponds. Small boats with trolling motors are ideal for fishing each Pond. The ponds can be accessed from the entrance to the Powhatan WMA off Route 627. Currently the road to the Sunfish Pond is closed to vehicles because of issues caused by vandalism and road erosion. Part of the road is schedule to reopen sometime in 2019 unless more issues arise.

For more information on the Powhatan Ponds, please contact:

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Table 1. Catch rates for fish collected from the Powhatan WMA Ponds in 2018. NC means none collected in pond during 2018 survey.

Species	Bass Pond			Bullhead Pond			Sunfish Pond		
	Number Collected	Catch Rate (fish/hour electrofishing)	Percentage of the Catch	Number Collected	Catch Rate (fish/hour electrofishing)	Percentage of the Catch	Number Collected	Catch Rate (fish/hour electrofishing)	Percentage of the Catch
Black Crappie	2	7	1	10	64	9	1	3	1
Bluegill	28	93	22	35	223	30	54	156	28
Channel Catfish	8	27	6	7	45	6	8	23	4
Largemouth Bass	45	150	35	27	172	23	91	263	47
Redear Sunfish	47	157	36	36	229	31	36	104	18
Warmouth	None Collected	NA	NA	None Collected	NA	NA	4	12	2
Yellow Bullhead	None Collected	NA	NA	1	6	1	None Collected	NA	NA

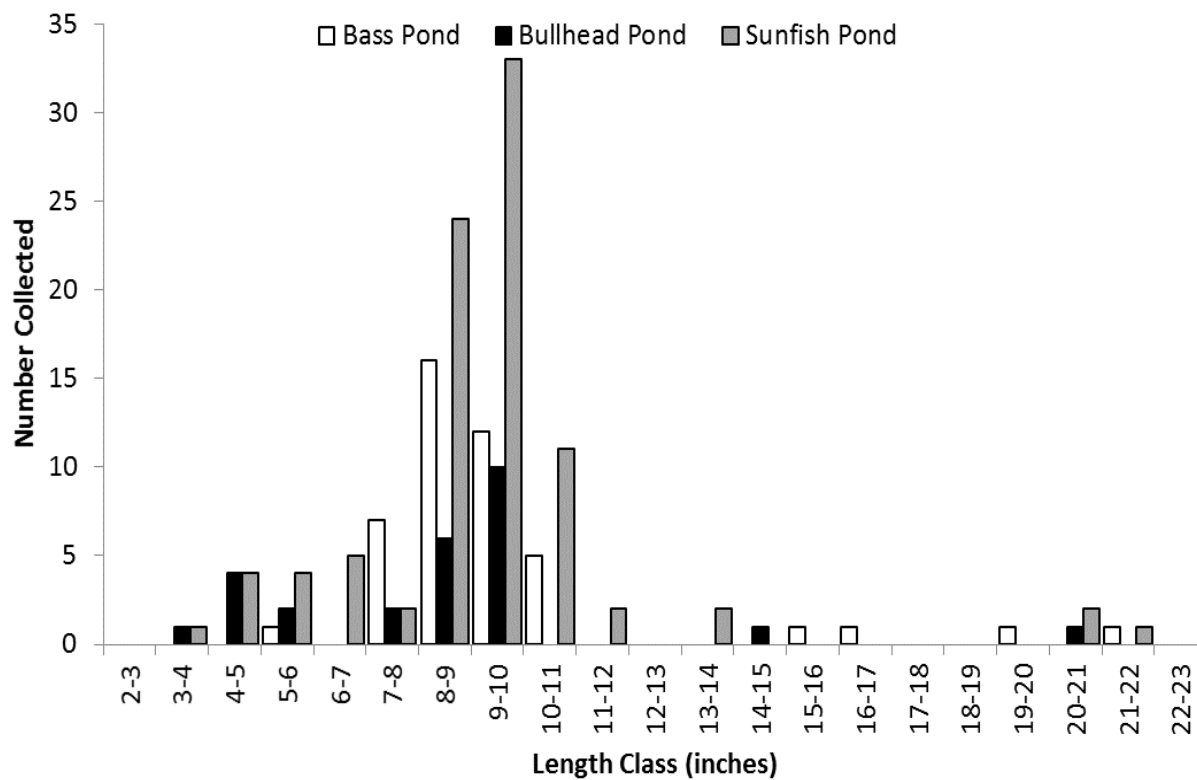


Figure 1. Length distribution of largemouth bass collected from the Powhatan WMA Ponds in 2018.

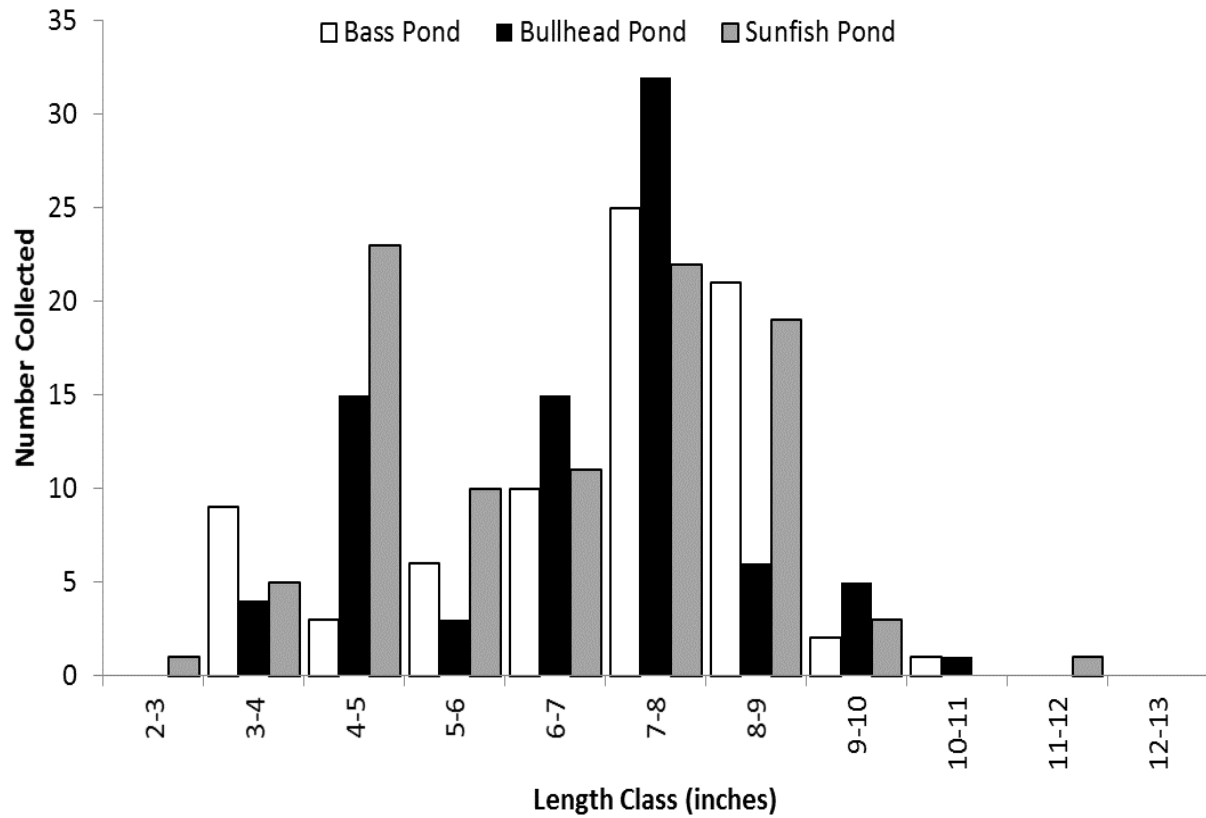


Figure 2. Length distribution of panfish collected throughout the Powhatan WMA Ponds in 2018. Panfish include bluegill, redear sunfish, black crappie, and warmouth sunfish.